Gems In Verse

The First Snowfall.

The snow had begun in the gloaming
And busily all the night
Had been heaping field and highway
With a silence deep and white.

Every pine and fir and hemlock
Wore ermine too dear for an earl,
And the poorest twig on the elm tree
Was ridged inch deep with pearl.

From sheds new roofed with Carrara
Came chanticleer's muffled crow,
The stiff rails were softened to swan's down
And still fluttered down the snow.
—Lowell.

"Johnny on the Spot."

The world has many golden gifts 'tis eager to bestow
On enterprising mortals who are not too shy or slow
To step right up and win their share of prizes when they can,
But, oh, the world's too busy, quite, to seek the absent man!
And those who mean to do so much next week or month or year,
Away off in some misty clime instead of now and here,
May some day rouse themselves and find a score of them have not
As much true "get there" as has one brisk "Johnny on the spot."

When shy Miles Standish sought to win the fair Priscilla's hand
By courting her by proxy, 't isn't hard to understand,
The comely Plymouth maiden said she really would prefer
John Alden, who possessed the spunk to come and speak with her.
That old, oft quoted piece of fudge which says that "Absence makes
The heart grow fonder" must be classed with those absurd mistakes
Which blunt, slang using folks would say are all a bit of "rot"—
The chap that wins the lady is the "Johnny on the spot."

The men who framed our nation fought against tremendous odds;
They never could have won had they been slow, weak hearted clods.
Each mother's son of them seemed glad to risk his precious neck;
Wherever duty called him, there it found him, right on deck.
Brave Washington was at the front, his country's course to guide,
With Adams, Franklin, Jefferson and Hancock at his side.
No proxies could have done the work for that immortal lot
Whose every man was what you'd call a "Johnny on the spot."

In love or war or politics or whatsoe'er you will
The wiser man is not the one to send a boy to mill.
Oh, no, he takes the grist himself, and, like a prudent man,
He makes the miller give him back the best return he can.
And "genius" properly defined, so sages all declare,
Means being at the proper "when" just at the proper "where."
So, of the many varied gifts the gods to men allot
The rarest ones are sure to fall to "Johnny on the spot."
—Success.

THE REDEMPTIONERS.

Miseries of Those Who Got Into Debt In Olden Times.

In Daniel De Foe's time debtors were frequently compelled in seeking means to extricate themselves from their embarrassments to consent to anything if they thereby could avoid the horrors of the debtors' prison. In many cases they took advantage of a custom that in one form or another had a sanction of antiquity, and being generally able-bodied men they placed themselves in the hands of some merchant or agent, who, having effected an arrangement with the creditors, took possession of the unfortunate debtors and, hurrying them to the nearest seaport, shipped them abroad, generally to Virginia or Maryland, as so much merchandise. Sometimes the dealer accompanied his cargo in order, if possible, to obtain a better price at the end of the voyage.

Arrived at their destination, the captives—to give them their real name—were sold to any planter whose offer would recoup the agent for the sum he had expended in purchase and transit and also allow him a handsome profit. By the terms of this sale the captive was bound to serve his new master for several years, his liberty being nominally secured at the end of that period, and from the hope of redemption and deliverance thus held out to him the term "redemptioner" came to be applied to these unfortunates.

But any hopes that the redemptioner might cherish of his ultimate liberation soon proved fallacious, and he found himself plunged into fresh embarrassments long before his period of servitude had expired.

Charges were made upon him for clothing, for tobacco, even for the necessaries of life—charges which he had no means of meeting, however good his inclination—and too late he found that he had in fact become a slave, without money, without rights and without hope. Such friends as he had were in England and probably had forgotten him altogether. Perhaps if even they remembered him they were without the means of assisting him, and the chance of money reaching the individual for whom it was intended was in those days very small. Pacific railways and "ocean greyhounds" were unknown in the "good old times," and communication was slow and insecure.

Some of these redemptioners were of course more fortunate than others and had friends and connections more powerful and more kindly disposed, and such often ultimately attained their freedom. But these were the exceptions, and, generally speaking, the unhappy victim labored on from year to year, his "redemption" receding further and further into the distance till at last death put an end to his sufferings.—Chambers' Journal.

Just Debts.

"And what were the provisions of your uncle's will?"

"That I should have all he left after the payment of his just debts."

"Ah, very good of the old man, wasn't it? What did he leave?"

"Just debts."—Chicago Record-Herald.

IN GREEN AND VIOLET

By IZOLA FORRESTER

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"THAT'S Agnes Florence Lilybelle," said Trix, setting another of her household gods up against the wall. "Nero chewed her poor dear feet all up until they wasn't anything left but regular hash, Uncle Archie."

"Terrible," said Uncle Archie, looking over Trix's fluffy curls at a new Whistler on the wall. What good taste Eleanor had; for instance, the ecru tint of the etching against that background of dark green burlap.

Trix gave Lilybelle a final loving pat and turned around to survey Mr. Gwynne, her small hands clasped around her knees, her head on one side. "You haven't been here for ever and ever so long, Uncle Archie. Mamma says she thinks you're 'fraid. What are you 'fraid of?"

"I've brought you a medicine case for that battered up family of yours," interposed Gwynne calmly, taking a tiny blue enameled bonbon box from his pocket. "These pills are to be given every five minutes."

Trix took the box and dosed the whole row of dolls lined up against the wall before she returned to the charge.

"It's most a whole week. Mr. Stephens comes up every night with his violin. He plays lemonades and things."

"Serenades, Trix."

"Yes; all soft and lonesome, you know, and mamma goes over to the window and looks out and does this." Trix sighed heavily.

Gwynne rose and crossed the room to the corner half encircled by the low, black bookcase. How deliciously dainty and homelike it all was—the great shaggy bear rug, the carved tabaret, with its little bronze pipe tray on it, the little Japanese ash cup and the low tobacco bowl.

Eleanor had arranged it all for him so he would always feel at home there and have his own special corner.

He could not say even to himself when he had first loved her. It was all so gradual, so unintentional, on his part. He had received the news of Bob's death with regret, remembering many a jolly boyish adventure he had shared with his cousin years ago in the Shenandoah, but the idea of having to meet his widow and look after her business interests was another proposition. She would probably want him to dine with her and talk things over, he had told himself, reading Eleanor's letter the second time. She would cry and tell him poor Bob's last words and all that sort of thing. He wished she had remained in Virginia.

As a matter of fact, he was not asked to dine. Eleanor had arrived in Chicago, had secured her apartments, had furnished them and was serenely settled in her new home long before Mr. Gwynne was apprised of her presence there. Then he had merely received a formal businesslike note requesting an interview relative to the full settlement of Bob's affairs. There had been neither antemortem messages nor despairing tears. Instead he found Eleanor serene, noncommittal and fully capable of managing the affairs of Bob's southern estate and western business.

As her legal adviser as well as cousin by marriage he had considered it his duty to call frequently, and then all at once the old commonplace world had turned topsy turvy, with paradise on top.

And yet it had all been practical. While he sat and watched her during the long winter evenings she had laughed and chatted on with the old frank, good comradeship that had grown to be so sweet a tie between them without venturing on the frontier, even, of sentiment. It was a week now, a whole week, and he had received no word from her. If she only knew how hard it had been for him to write that letter, to try to make her understand—she who had understood everything else in his life so well—how dear she was to him!

He leaned his elbow on top of the bookcase and stared grimly at a little bronze satyr that grinned mockingly back at him. Thirty-six, and she could not be over twenty-five.

"Mamma says she's awful sorry you don't come any more, Uncle Archie," Trix was saying. "She thinks it's because you don't like Mr. Stephens. And what do you think?" Trix leaned forward mysteriously. "Mamma cries about something. The other night after Mr. Stephens went I crept out of bed 'cause I wanted to be rocked and cuddled, and I tiptoed in here, and there she sat right over there at that desk, with her head bowed down, crying dreadful! And I asked her if it was 'cause Uncle Archie didn't come any more."

"And then?" exclaimed Gwynne.

"She said, 'No,'" replied Trix serenely. "It wasn't you at all. She said her tooth ached. But she had your picture on the desk all the same. And look here!"

She climbed up on a chair and took a photograph from a little silver rack on top of the desk.

"See those spots?" she asked, handing it to Gwynne. "Well, that's where she cried on it. And what do you suppose she said?"

He felt like a miserable spy, but it was so good to see the dull blotches on the smooth gray platinum surface and know that they had fallen from her eyes.

"Trix, you small angel," he said eagerly, "what did she say?"

"She said"—Trix leaned forward confidentially. "Don't you tell."

"Never!" vowed Gwynne fervently.

"Well, then, she said, 'Oh, dear!'"

"Oh, dear, what?"

"That's all, just 'Oh, dear.' But she said it real hard."

He handed back the picture. She simply pitied him, that was all. That was why she had not answered his letter. That was why she had cried.

"Anyhow, I don't like stuffed dolls very well, Uncle Archie." Trix had restored the picture and gone tranquilly back to her family. "I just love paper dolls. Mamma cuts some of them out and paints them awful pretty, and I can cut some out too. Want to see them, Uncle Archie?"

"No, Trix, no," Gwynne said absently. He had crossed the room to the window. He would not go away. There would still be the old frank friendship until perhaps Stephens—

"I've got forty 'leven families, Uncle Archie. There's the pink family, and the yellow family, and the blue family, and here's the dearest, beautifulest of all. It's like mamma's flowers that Mr. Stephens sent her, all green and violet. Look!"

She spread them out on the window sill, while he idly acknowledged each introduction. Suddenly, as she laid the last on his knee, he caught his



Eleanor stood under the portieres smiling at them.

breath and bent forward eagerly. They were cut from dark green paper, with a tracery of violet lines running crosswise. He glanced at the lines on the largest and oldest member of the family. They were very familiar.

"As my wife, Eleanor, give me the right to love and"—

Trailing across another's petticoat, he read:

"Not worthy of you, darling, but if the devotion of a life"—

He crushed the paper in his hand while Trix cried out against such reckless destruction of her favorites. So this was the fate of the letter on which he had based all his hopes of happiness—cut up into paper dolls for Trix.

"It was such lovely paper," moaned Trix regretfully. "I only found one little envelope besides that sheet, and I've hunted and hunted all over mamma's desk for some more."

A thought occurred to Gwynne. He tried to speak unconcernedly.

"Where did you get this piece, Trix? Did mamma cut it for you?"

"No, Uncle Archie. I did it all by my own self," Trix assured him proudly. "Tilly laid the paper on mamma's desk one day, and I wanted it 'cause it was so pretty." Warned by his silence, she added eagerly: "Mamma won't care a bit. I took four or five pink ones off her desk, and she didn't say a word. They were from Mr. Stephens."

An overwhelming rush of gladness swept over Gwynne as he raised Trix in his arms.

"Trix, you dear, small villain," he said, laying his cheek against the soft, fluffy curls, "if I promise to bring you a whole box of this paper may I not have your blessed green and violet family for my very own?"

There was a soft frou frou of silken skirts in the hallway, and Eleanor stood under the portieres smiling at them over the refractory glove she was coaxing into place.

"How you two do quarrel," she said. But Trix slipped down from his arms and rushed to her. It was all told in helter skelter, unsparing fashion, while Gwynne turned back to the window.

Presently there was silence, and they two stood alone. He glanced over his shoulder at her. She stood with the poor, crumpled fragments of the fateful letter in her hands, reading the broken lines. Her dress was green, a soft, delicious spring green, and on her breast was a great cluster of single petaled violets.

Then Eleanor spoke:

"There has been a mistake, I think. I never saw this letter before." She raised her eyes and met his gaze, full of utter, hopeless misery, and crossed swiftly to his side. "You poor boy," she said softly. "You thought"—

"Stephens," Gwynne blurted out recklessly. "I'm old and"—

Eleanor looked at him steadily for a moment, and her dark eyes were tender and pitying. Suddenly she raised her hand.

"Won't you fasten my glove for me, dear, please?" she said in a voice that trembled slightly. "We are late now for church."

He raised the hand to his lips just as the bells rang out a peal of joy and gladness.

CHOICE MISCELLANY

The Useful Gum Shoe.

When the temperature goes up and a general thaw comes in winter after big snowstorms and a hard freeze there is no standby like the gum shoe and his big brother, the gum boot. No trust has yet tanned leather capable of standing long service in slush and mud without discomfort to the wearer. The gum shoe sticketh closer than a brother and is warmer than a sealskin. Not beautiful to look at, although glossy and cozylike, he fills the bill and saves repairs on shoes. He goes about silently and unobtrusively and is always on the side of the drys as against the wets.

It was an unappreciative man who manufactured the term "gum shoe politics." The gum shoe, the original benefactor of the race, has nothing to be ashamed of and is not afraid of the light of day. He meets his enemies, slush and the others, and crushes them, saving doctors' bills and helping along the insurance companies, providing generally against coughs and colds and staving off the purchase of coffins and tombstones.—Baltimore Herald.

Rivers Do Not Draw Maps.

The supreme court has decided that a river cannot draw a map. The action arose from a question whether the shallow upper Missouri by changing its bed could transfer a number of citizens from Nebraska to Missouri. It cannot. The boundary follows the old channel.

This question doesn't matter so much with states in the same union, though a man hardly likes to go to sleep in one state and wake up with his farm in another. But along the Rio Grande, between Mexico and the United States, the shifting of the river channel might make trouble. Recently the stream got on the northern side of several thousand Texans, who would have objected to being made Mexicans thereby. But the United States and Mexico always maintain the old boundary, whatever the river may do.

If rivers could make maps there might be trouble almost any time between Argentina and Paraguay or between Bavaria and Austria, not to mention other cases.

Why a Hotel Clerk Couldn't Hear.

The room clerk in one of the big hotels of the city found difficulty in hearing patrons of the hotel and thought that he was becoming deaf. He consulted a specialist, who told him that he could detect no defect in his ear. He then decided upon a closer observation and discovered that his inability to hear was most pronounced when he stood in a certain place behind the hotel desk. Patrons would come up to the desk to get information and the clerk could catch only a few scattering words and would have to lean forward with his hand to his ear to hear his interrogator. A closer investigation disclosed the fact that the cold air coming through the revolving doors into the steam heated building created a current which was deflected by a large board behind which the clerk worked. This draft passed between the clerk and patrons as they stood in front of the desk and diverted the sound of their voices.—Philadelphia Record.

The Poor of Paris.

Depression reigns in Paris owing to the poor men in society who have to make presents to the rich at the new year. Says one unfortunate: "For two months after New Year's day I hesitate to buy a pair of gloves or take a cab when it rains. Cigars are forbidden luxuries, and at home I smoke a pipe. What has become of my money? It has been spent on flowers and bonbons for the wealthy hostesses whose invitations to dinner my social position forces me to accept. And they are not amusing, those dinners! Observe that I am invited by these ladies solely because they know I shall have to send them presents, and when their salons look like the sweetstuff shops or the florist's, they have to give most of the things away and run the risk of letting the donor recognize his gift in another house!" Truly Parisian society is very complex.—London Chronicle.

Climate and Consumption.

We are gradually abandoning the idea that the cure of tuberculosis is dependent on certain climatic conditions. Experience is proving that abundant food, fresh air and rest are the essentials of such a cure and that they can be applied in practically all climates. The Carolinas, California, Colorado, Arizona and New Mexico, as any physician in these states will testify, are filled with pitiful wrecks of humanity who should never have been allowed, much less encouraged, by their physicians to leave home in the last stages of tuberculosis, with no prospect of being able to obtain proper treatment after their arrival at their destinations.—Journal of A. M. A.

Honoring an Industrious Hen.

Gandersheim, a German village, some time since was en fete. The occasion was the honoring of a hen which had laid its thousandth egg. Many of the houses were decorated with flags, while in the evening the proprietor of the hen entertained his friends at supper, at which the principal dish was a gigantic omelet. The function was a splendid success, and the health of the hen was drunk with great enthusiasm.

Japanese and American Generals.

The Japanese have failed to produce generals of genius, whereas the Americans, though not a martial people, were conspicuous for their production during the civil war. The reason, we believe, is that the America of the forties and fifties was a backwoods country, while Japan for over a thousand years has not been a backwoods land, but rather a land of ordered civilisation.—Spectator.

HUMOR OF THE HOUR

A Question of Propriety.

"But," she said, "you—you—really—do you think you ought to talk to me in this way?"

"Why not? I haven't said anything wrong, have I?"

"N-no; oh, no, nothing wrong, only it seems to me that—that—well, that you might if I didn't stop you."

"Is there anything wrong in a man telling a girl that she is beautiful?"

"There! I knew you were coming to that! I mustn't remain here with you any longer. Please let us go."

"Just a moment. I can't understand why you"—

"I mustn't let you talk to me about—that. Do you wish to—to compromise me?"

"Certainly not. I wouldn't do anything of that kind for the world. But there's no danger. Stay!" he continued, catching her by the hand as she started to move away. "You see, my wife applied for a divorce this morning, and"—

"Oh," she exclaimed, with a happy sigh, "why didn't you let me know that before? Were you going to say something about love?"—Chicago Record-Herald.

To Get the Good of It.

When Edna, aged seven, saw a funeral procession pass the house she turned to her mother and asked, "Do all funerals have carriages?"

"Yes, dear," answered her parent.

"Then," said Edna, "when I die and go to my funeral please, mother, may I sit on top with the coachman and do the driving?"—Lippincott's Magazine.

Quite Right.

He was very witty, and one day when he and I were speaking to each other he suddenly put the following query, "What is nothing?"

After several fruitless attempts to solve it he volunteered an explanation. Said he, "It is a bunghole without a barrel round it."—Birmingham (England) Post.

Her Fault.



"She is always jumping to conclusions."

"Yes, I know she is a great reader of novels."

Foxy Ma and Pa.

Edith—They say Grace's parents are opposed to her match with Charley Jones.

Gertrude—Yes, that's what they say, but I guess they only pretend to be opposed to it so as to keep Fred from getting lukewarm in his attentions to Grace.—Boston Transcript.

Motherly Wisdom.

Pretty Daughter—Tom says that after we are married he is going to try his best to make my life one long dream of bliss.

Practical Mother—In other words, he is going to try to keep your eyes closed to a lot of the things he does.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Hard Lines.

Ascum—What's the matter with you this morning? You behave as if your breakfast had disagreed with you.

Grump—So it did. The carrier neglected to leave my newspaper this morning, so I had to talk to my wife through the entire meal.—Philadelphia Press.

A Safe Enterprise.

"Why do so many actors insist on playing Shakespeare?"

"I suspect," answered Mr. Stormington Barnes, "that it's because they can take all the credit if they succeed and blame the public's lack of literary taste if they fail."—Washington Star.

Their Only Value.

"Yes," said Mrs. Woodby, "the fire destroyed all our family heirlooms. The loss was quite irreparable."

"The idea!" exclaimed Mrs. Wise, who knew a thing or two. "Didn't you have them insured?"—New York Times.

Ambition Gratified.

First Bookworm—Well, I'm working on a file of newspapers now and am entirely satisfied.

Second Ditto—You always did have a sneaking ambition to get into the papers.—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Curtain Lectures.

Her—I understand Miss Strongmind is going to give a series of lectures this winter.

Him—Yes, I guess that's right; at least she is to be married to young Meeks next month.—Chicago News.

At the White House.

"What is the matter? Why have we been kept waiting here so long?"

"The doorkeeper is announcing the name of a Russian diplomat."—Collier's Weekly.

A Preference.

"Do you think Brownson has a good voice for speaking?"

"After hearing him sing I think he has."—Boston Herald.

FACTS IN FEW LINES

It takes mail at least seven days to go from Chicago to London.

San Francisco is thinking of having a world's fair on the completion of the Panama canal.

The production of samovars (teakettles) in Russia amounts to over 4,000,000 rubles every year.

New blast furnaces are being erected on the island of Elba, in the Mediterranean. The isle is famous for its wonderful iron ore.

A sarcophagus dating from the year 1000 and containing human remains has been discovered by some workmen while digging a well in the Rue des Gobelins, Paris.

Dowie refused to have pictures of himself made by a moving picture company. It was intended to use the pictures as an attraction for one of the side shows at the St. Louis fair.

The St. Louis fair has shown that the inventions and discoveries which are now doing the most to change things are radium, the submarine boat, wireless telegraphy, the aeroplane and automobile.

The public health committee of Camberwell, London, proposes to fit up the public baths in the borough for cricket practice during the winter months. Apparently the Camberwellians do not bathe in winter.

Ten years ago in England and Wales there was one insane person to each 324 of the population. Now the ratio is one to each 288. The increase in lunacy is attributed to a considerable degree to the intense strain of modern life.

The Northeastern Railway company of England is experimenting with small motor freight cars in the agricultural districts. They distribute fertilizing materials and cattle feed to the farmers and return with farm produce to be shipped by rail.

It is benevolently suggested by the Car that the trouble caused by boys who climb upon the seating accommodation of slow going motor cars in crowded thoroughfares might be effectively removed by a high tension wire controlled by the driver.

The navy department is after good watches for the men and officers who man our torpedo boats. It is said that from $75 to $150 is offered for an American watch which can stand the constant shaking which it must receive on these unstable little craft.

Robert Moffatt is about to give up Midneck farm, Westerkirk, Dumfries, Scotland. The farm was originally granted to Thomas Moffatt by Robert Bruce in 1302. In 1670 the Moffatts sold it to the Duke of Buccleuch, but continued as tenants to this day.

The British Society For the Promotion of Kindness to Animals is going to make an effort to "secure for those who after a battle tended wounded animals the same protection as is now accorded under the Geneva convention to those who succor wounded men."

In Birmingham, England, resides one Tommy Tank, who has spent his life in alternate attempts to live up to and to escape the hoodoo of his name. He has signed the pledge forty times. Last week he made his one hundred and seventeenth appearance in the police court.

The Electrician announces that a congress for the purpose of discussing the production and application of Roentgen rays will be held in Berlin on April 30. The occasion is the tenth anniversary of the discovery, and Professor Roentgen will be present as the guest of honor.

The Indian bureau at Washington has decided that the Indian appropriations are made for the sole benefit of the Indians "of the United States proper," and therefore no more Alaskan Indians are to be accepted at any of its schools, and those already enrolled are to be gradually eliminated.

Though butterflies and moths are found widely distributed all over the globe, they are by far the most abundant in the tropics. For instance, Brazil can show to the collector not less than 700 different species within an hour's walk of Para. There are not half as many in all Europe.

Kansas recently appropriated a sum of money to give to the man who invented a way to kill prairie dogs. A Topeka man at once set to work to win the prize, and in concocting a mixture breathed the fumes, which cured him of catarrh. Now he has got out a patent medicine instead of a prairie dog poison.

A new sect known as John the Baptist Pilgrims are conducting a mission in the north of Ireland and are gaining fresh adherents daily. They believe in baptism by immersion, in having "no certain dwelling place and in depending upon God for the necessaries of life." They have all things in common and address one another by their Christian names.

It was stated at a meeting in London that Europeans in Africa sometimes used the "trade" gin and rum sent out for the natives for mixing paint instead of turpentine. No European ever dreamed of drinking it. Potato spirit made in Germany is the principal medium of commerce with the natives of west Africa. Its use by the natives was described as "deadly."

French West Africa is to be an Eveless paradise. The governor general has intimated to the minister of the colonies that the number of stations and posts offering facilities for married officers or functionaries are very few and that great inconvenience is already caused by the difficulty of providing family quarters. The minister is requested to stop the further ingress of families, and an order has just been issued warning all whom it may concern that appointments in west Africa must henceforth be accepted on the basis of bachelorhood. Army officers will, of course, leave families behind.